

Testimony for Charter Oak State College –

By Carlo Esidore

Appropriations Committee – Public Hearing

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Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Carlo Esidore and I reside in Portland. I am honored to be here today to speak about the importance Charter Oak State College to the State of CT and its role as a workforce development agent.

Like many, if not most, of the College's graduates, I reached a point where it became clear to me that I needed to finish my Bachelor's degree if I wanted to make progress in my career. In fact, I needed to do more than finish my bachelor's; I needed to get a Master's degree. My research quickly revealed that Charter Oak had the elements necessary for my success: flexibility and price. To put it in a single phrase: they had the right degree at the right time.

For me, like many adults, I had accumulated college credits along the way, and I needed an institution that would allow me to use that history and build on it. Charter Oak had the most flexible transfer credit policies that I discovered. They accepted and used nearly every credit I had on my transcripts and this saved me time and money.

They also offered their courses online, which gave me the ability to do my schoolwork when I had time in my schedule. And to make it even better, I never had to travel to class, which saved me more time and more money.

So I finished my degree, and went on to finish my Masters. I have made the progress in my career that I knew I could. I am currently employed at The Hartford in IT Operations, because of the education I received from Charter Oak, I have had many opportunities that allow me to utilize what I have learned in the online classroom.

And as you no doubt know because you have oversight over their budgets, Charter Oak is the lowest cost baccalaureate provider in the State. Finding an institution that welcomed adults, accepted my credits in transfer, offered flexible coursework, and was cost sensitive made my decision to attend easy.

But I want to finish by saying that the coursework was excellent. Their professors were attentive and knowledgeable. So much so, that I took my counselor's advice, finished an online Master's degree, and now I am working for the College as one of those online instructors.

The only part of this story that should not make you smile is that I had to take that online Master's degree out of state. It is more than time for Charter Oak to begin providing online Master's degrees.

Thank you for your attention and I would be happy to answer any questions.